

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2023 – DRAFT
In person Meeting at The Landing in Potomac Yards
4-6 PM

Members Physically Present: Chair, Michael Schuster; Barbara D’Agostino, Ray Biegun, Barbara Huelat, David Kaplan, Jessica Lefevre, Jim Lindsay, Karen McKeon, Lois Steele, Mary Lee Anderson, Thomas Reeder, Jenn Stowe, Gerri Wallace.

Members Attending Remotely for Medical Reasons: Joanne Broderick

Members Excused: Joy Kone

Members Absent: William Campbell

Liaisons Present: Ian Torrance, Alexandria Police Department; Pamela Guerra, Senior Center @ Charles Houston; Darrell Wesley.

Guests Present: Alan Dinsmore, Transportation Committee; Linc Cummings, Arlington Commission on Aging; Mesha Hall, Joe Jones, Pascal Masuba

Staff Members Present: Ashley Johnson, Pam Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Ashley Sellman, Workforce Development Center

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Michael Schuster called the January meeting of the Commission on Aging ("COA") to order at 4:05 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda for the meeting was approved.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the January meeting were approved.
4. **Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report.** Sgt. Torrance did not have any updates for the commission. He said that Alexandria City Chief of Police will attend a future COA meeting. He discussed the incident of "sudden death." The medical examiner determines the cause of death in such cases.
5. **Special Presentations:** Mesha Hall, Community Services Coordinator, Office of Community Services of the Department of Community and Human Services presented a review of the rent relief program. There are currently 100 recipients, confined to those 65 or older, or those with a disability. She said the program has room for up to 40 more, depending on the income tier in which they belong. There are currently three tiers,

ranging from \$500 to \$275 a month based on income. The average time in the program is five years, some staying longer than the average. The rent relief program is locally funded; its current budget is \$776,000. The recipient rent to income ratio is 96%/70%, that is, without rent relief, the individual uses 96% of his or her income on rent; with rental assistance, he or she uses 70% of their income for rent. This ratio is far from the program's goal, which is to reduce the amount paid for rent to 30% of household income. Mesha says that the current tier structure should be increased to reflect the higher cost of renting.

6. **Executive Committee Report.** The draft of the minutes from the meeting on February 27th were attached as part of the agenda.

7. **Discussion/Action Items:**

- **Covid-19 Updates** – Gerri Wallace gave her report, as follows:

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria C.D.C. Covid-19 Measures COVID-19 Community Level Transmission rate is **LOW** as of February 6, 2023. The City of Alexandria reports 80.5% or 126,819 fully vaccinated AND 86.7% or 136,571 partially vaccinated. NEW INFO NOT LOADED FOR MARCH YET.

As of March 2, 2023, Hospital admissions per 100k is 3.5 = LOW. Inpatient Bed is 3.60% = LOW, although the numbers are LOW.

STATE OF VIRGINIA

As of March 7, 2023, Across the state of VA, 6.3M, or 73.8% fully vaccinated. Demographics include State-wide: Ages 65+ people vaccinated 95.2%

C.D.C. website for Health Topics from A-Z

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-topics.html>

N.Y. Times latest trends as of March 8, 2023.

- The community level of Covid-19 in Alexandria is **low** based on cases and hospitalizations, according to the most recent update from the C.D.C. on March 2. [Read more about the C.D.C.'s recommendations here.](#)
- The number of **hospitalized Covid patients** has fallen in the Alexandria area, and deaths have remained at about the same level.
- The **test positivity rate** in Alexandria is high.
- An average of **8 cases per day** were reported in Alexandria, a 34% decrease from the average two weeks ago. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a total of **45,583 cases have been reported.**
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, at least **1 in 688** residents have died of Covid-19, a total of **232 reported deaths.**

How to read Covid data now

Higher test positivity rates are a sign that many infections are not reported — even if they are tested for at home. This results in a more severe undercount of cases. The number of hospitalized patients with Covid is a more reliable measure because testing is more consistent in hospitals. [Read more about the data.](#)

To get alerts, text ALEXCOVID19 to 888777.

For questions about COVID-19, call 703.746.4988.

For chest pain or shortness of breath, call or text 911 immediately.

C.D.C. website for Health Topics from A-Z

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-topics.html>

- **Age Friendly Plan** – Michael gave an update
- **City Budget Process**- Mary Lee Anderson summarized the minutes from the Advocacy Committee meeting with the city director of the Office of the Management of the Budget, Morgan Routt, and budget analyst, Meaghan McGrane. After a discussion of the Advocacy Committee’s suggestions, Lois Steele moved that the Commission on Aging provide testimony requesting that the City Council add \$18,915 to the City Manager's proposed budget to cover the loss in Older American Act funds due to the new intrastate-funding formula. In the event, the General Assembly approves the \$700,000 supplemental budget making up for these cuts, that money could be used to eliminate the current waiting list for personal care services. Jessica Lefevre seconded the motion. It passed unanimously."

8. **Liaison Reports**

- a. **Division of Aging and Adult Services** (<https://www.alexandriava.gov/Aging>) – Ashley Johnson, the Deputy Director of the Division gave the report. She discussed the newly released needs survey. The Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults (CASOA) is designed to examine the status of older adults and the community around many (17) topics of livability within six domains: Community Design, Employment and Finances, Equity and Inclusivity, Health and Wellness, Information and Assistance, and Productive Activities. Summary scores of community livability were created through the aggregation of a series of resident ratings within each of these different livability aspects and domains. Of the 17 aspects of livability examined, the aspects found to be strongest in the region related to areas of Social Engagement (average positive score of 78%), Safety (73%), and Civic Engagement (72%). The areas showing the greatest need for improvement related to Housing (25%), Mental Health (37%) and Independent Living (41%). More detailed information about each livability domain follows.
- b. **INOVA Alexandria Hospital**- no one present to report.

- c. **Arlington legislative committee meeting** – There was no meeting in February.
- d. **Human Rights Commission** – Tom Reeder. Tom discussed the Commission’s concern over the high rate of evictions in the city, and whether they were discriminatory.
- e. **At Home Alexandria (AHA)**- Nothing to report.
- f. **Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria**- Joanne Broderick – No new report.
- g. **AARP** – Nothing to report.
- h. **NVAN** – The Alexandria COA will host the March 21st NVAN meeting.
- i. **St. Martin de Porres Senior Center** – No report.
- j. **Senior Center at Charles Houston** – Pamela Guerra, nothing else to add.
- k. **Senior Services of Alexandria** - Mary Lee Anderson- On March 16th, there is a workshop, Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors at 10 am, Beth El Hebrew Congregation. Older adults will hear from several local non-profits about all the volunteering opportunities available. Finally, SSA will have its Annual Gala and Silent Auction on March 25. The Honorees this year will be Donita Greene; Retired Sheriff Dana Lawhorne; the late Honorable Kerry Donley; and the Rev. Dr. George Pera.
- l. **Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Alliance, NVFPA**. Mary Lee Anderson said there nothing to report.
- m. **Alexandria Commission on Employment**. Mary Lee Anderson introduced Ashley Sellman, who just started her new role at the Workforce Development Center,
- n. **Successful Aging** – Mary Lee Anderson reported that the Valentine's Day event for seniors at Lee Center was well attended and lively.
- o. **Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, ADSC** – No update.
- p. **Economic Development Committee**. Mary Lee Anderson- nothing to report.
- q. **Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, AHAAC** – Jan Macidull. Nothing new to report.
- r. **Commission for Women**- Jenn Stowe said an event is being planned to celebrate their 50-year anniversary.

s. **Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.** – Nothing to report.

9. **Committee Updates.**

a. **Outreach.** The Committee – Co-Chair Ray Biegun and Barbara D’Agostino reported. The committee will meet on February 23, 2023.

b. **Transportation** – Co-Chairs David Kaplan & Bill Campbell. The Committee met on March 1, at Charles Houston Center. The guest speaker was an advocate on bike safety.

c. **Housing Committee-** Lois Steele said at their last meeting they discussed how the COA can be a more effective advocate on affordable housing issues.

d. **Health/Dementia Friendly.** Barbara Huelat – Met last Thursday to plan new goals and events—report to follow.

10. **Other Business.** None

11. **New Business.** None

12. **Public Comments.** None

13. **Meeting Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

The minutes will be presented for approval at the COA meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at the Landing.

February COA Meeting: at The Landing on March 9, 2023.

The next Executive Committee meeting date is TBD (since it falls on Memorial Day), at the Landing.

Minutes prepared by Barbara Huelat, COA Secretary.

